

LICENSING COMMITTEE

25th September 2018

Present – Councillors Myers (Chairman), Baxandall, Jaquin, Ireton, Madeley, Moorby, Solloway, and Welch.

Officers – Solicitor to the Council, Legal Services Manager, Licensing Manager and Committee Administrator.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Heseltine and Thompson.
Councillor Madeley arrived at 6:33pm

Start: 6.30pm

Finish: 7:14pm

The minutes of the Committee's meeting held on 21st August 2018 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

Minutes for Report

LIC.210

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr Nasser Hussain, a Craven taxi driver/operator and a Skipton resident addressed the Committee about the proposed fares tariff including a new discretionary booking fee. He requested that the taxi trade were notified when Licensing Committee meetings were taking place and that they were fully consulted and their views taken into account regarding the fares tariff. He also mentioned that issues on the ranks which had been raised some while ago had still to be sorted.

The Chairman reassured Mr Hussain that the taxi trade's responses to the proposed amended fares table would be fully considered as part of the consultation exercise and that any other issues they had would always be explored by the Council's Licensing team and remedied as appropriate.

LIC.211

REVIEW OF TAXI FARES

Further to Minute LIC.207/18-19, the Licensing Manager submitted a report seeking approval from Members to undertake a statutory public consultation exercise on a proposed amended fares table as set out in Appendix A to the report which included a discretionary distance to pick up charge. A proprietor had also proposed the inclusion of a hiring charge based on 'time'.

However, following officer research involving the Institute of Licensing it appeared that comparable local authorities had not adopted this type of tariff. Craven's tariff card already included a 'waiting time' which was calculated when the meter was activated and whilst the engine was running. If an hourly rate was to be included a problem would occur if the driver switched the engine off whilst waiting as the meter would then reset itself. From an enforcement perspective including an option for an hourly rate to be used rather than the usual formula of distance including a waiting time element would be difficult to regulate and enforce. The Licensing Manager, therefore, did not recommend a tariff based on time being included in the proposed fares tariff.

At the meeting a letter was circulated from a licensing consultant who represented the Skipton Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Taxi Association. The Association welcomed the proposed introduction of a booking fee but did not feel the proposed fares accurately reflected the cost of travelling to a customer's pick-up location. The Association proposed an amendment to the fares tariff and that their proposals were given due consideration during the consultation process.

During the course of the ensuing discussion, Members indicated that whilst it was important for the Council to have a fares table that was acceptable to taxi drivers and covered their costs they wanted to ensure that taxis remained affordable and did not become prohibitively expensive for the travelling public.

- Resolved** – (1) That, the Solicitor to the Council is authorised to consult on the proposed amendment to the fares tariff as set out in Appendix A to the report now submitted to include a ‘distance to pick up point charge’ and ‘soiling charge’.
- (2) That, the proposed fares take effect from the day after the objection period ends provided that no objections to the proposals are received.
- (3) That, any responses from the consultation be reported to the next Licensing Committee which shall fix the table of fares.

Minutes for Decision

- None -

Chairman.